

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 1383

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, NG, AG, LY, CD, ML
SUBJ: SAHARA SUMMIT

REF: A. STATE 63335

B. NIAMEY 1326

1. SUMMARY

MET WITH FONMIN DJERMAKOYE MARCH 22 TO DISCUSS RANGE
OF ISSUES AND TO ADVISE OF PENDING CODEL VISIT APRIL 14
AND 15 WHICH COINCIDES WITH CELEBRATION OF TAKEOVER BY
PRESENT GOVERNMENT. PRIMARY PURPOSE OF EXPANDED SUMMIT
TO PROVIDE TABLE AND NIGER GOOD OFFICES FOR CHADIAN/
LIBYAN DISCUSSION OF FRONTIER AS WELL AS DELICATELY
PROG ALGERIANS TO OPEN UP ON SPANISH SAHARA ISSUE. GON
CONSIDERS ZAIRE SITUATION VERY DANGEROUS FOR AFRICA
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AND SAYS PRINCIPAL BENEFITS FLOWING FROM AFRO-ARAB
SUMMIT WERE BILATERAL.END SUMMARY

2. NIAMEY SUMMIT

WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE SUMMIT MEETING OF MARCH 19-21
AMONG THE SAHARA BORDER STATES OF MALI, ALGERIA,

NIGER, LIBYA AND CHAD, FONMIN DEMURRED THAT HE HAD PROMISED A FEW MEMBERS OF DIP CORPS THAT HE WOULD BRIEF ENTIRE CORPS ON MEETINGS. (AMB WAS PRESENT DURING THAT DISCUSSION). DESPITE THIS OPENING GAMBIT HE PROCEEDED. IN AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO LIBYAN OCCUPATION OF CHADIAN LAND HE DELIVERED HIMSELF WITH FEELING OF THE VIEW THAT AFRICA WOULD BE IN GRAVE DANGER IF THE MORE POWERFUL COUNTRIES COULD PREY AT WILL UPON THE WEAKER. NIGER IS FOCUSSED ON ITS DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS. IT DOES NOT HAVE SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS EXIST IN NEIGHBORING STATES BUT BECAUSE OF ITS STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC POSITION LINKING WEST AND CENTRAL, NORTH WITH SUB-SAHARA, ARAB WITH AFRICA, NIGER HAS A SPECIAL ROLE TO PLAY AS A LINK BETWEEN THESE SEPARATE WORLDS AND--MORE SPECIFICALLY, NIGER WANTED TO BRING LIBYA AND CHAD TOGETHER--HAVE THE TWO DELEGATIONS MEET AND TO OFFER TO THEM MEDIATION SERVICES OF NIGER. THE DELEGATIONS MET AND LATER "PROMISED" NIGER THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE WORKING ON THE PROBLEM. HE ASSUMES THAT THEY WERE SAYING THAT THERE WILL BE FURTHER MEETINGS. NIGER'S OFFER TO MEDIATION IS STILL OUTSTANDING. THERE APPEARED TO BE NEITHER ACCEPTANCE NOR REJECTION. HE INDICATED WITH A SHRUG THAT NIGER HAD TO ACCEPT THEIR ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS. CRUISINGLY, THE ONLY OTHER ASPECT OF THE SUMMIT THAT HE MENTIONED WAS THE SPANISH SAHARA. FIRST OF ALL NIGER HAS VERY ENCOURAGED BY BOUMEDIENNE'S PRESENCE AND

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PARTICIPATION DESPITE THE FACT THAT NONE OF THE OTHER AFRICAN PARTICIPANTS RECOGNIZE THE POLISARIO. AS HE PUT IT, THE SUBJECT OF SPANISH SAHARA WAS INJECTED INDIRECTLY SINCE NONE OF THE OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES WERE INVOLVED IN THE CONFERENCE. BOUMEDIENNE DID NOT OFFER ANY HOPE OF SOLUTION. FONMIN PESSIMISTIC ABOUT POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE IN ADVERSARIES' POSITIONS AND SITUATION.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT QADDAFI'S ABSENCE EMPHATICALLY STATE THAT QADDAFI HAS NOW "COMPLETELY ISOLATED" HIMSELF. (I ASSUME HE MEANS ISOLATED FROM AFRO-ARAB WORLD). HE FEELS THAT HIS ABSENCE FROM THE AFRO ARAB SUMMIT WHEN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF PROMISES WERE MADE BY OTHER ARAB NATIONS WAS A SERIOUS MISTAKE FOR QADDAFI. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY FONMIN EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT QADDAFI EVER GAVE PRIOR NOTICE THAT HE WOULD NOT ATTEND

MEETING (SEE REFTEL).

4. AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT

DJERMAKOYE SAID LITTLE ABOUT MEETINGS EXCEPT THAT THE BILATERAL UNDERSTANDINGS CONSTITUTED PRIMARY PRODUCT OF THE AFRICA-ARAB SUMMIT. HE REPEATED THIS FOR EMPHASIS WHILE FURTHER STATING THAT "GLOBAL" CONSIDERATIONS WERE OF SMALL MOMENT.

5. ZAIRE

DJERMAKOYE VIEWS ZAIRE CRISIS AS DANGEROUS FOR ALL OF AFRICA. MOBUTU HAS BROUGHT SOME UNITY TO A LARGE NUMBER OF DISPARATE TRIBES. THE CURRENT MOVE CONSTITUTES A THREAT TO THAT UNITY, & 9
-6 294DS HE SAID THAT THE DISINTEGRATION OF ONE
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COUNTRY THREATENS THE UNITY OF ALL OF AFRICA PARTICULARLY WHEN THAT DISINTEGRATION IS ACCOMPLISHED BY AN EXTERNAL FORCE. 53 33 9-7
-:589, #-0343\$?6 5#3)-(9* 3:74856 8, -\$\$8
ABABA, BUT P IS MUCH ENCOURAGED BY NIGERIAN OPENNESS TO MEDIATION. HE HARBORS A SUSPICION OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT BY REFERRING TO STALIN ORGANS AS NON-INDIGENOUS TO AFRICA. I DID NOT PRESS HIM ON THIS.

6. FONMIN VOLUNTEERED THAT ZAIRE CRISIS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH ALGERIANS DURING SUMMIT WEEKEND. ALGERIANS ARE CONCERNED. THEY FEEL THAT THE ANTITACHOMBE STANCE TEN YEARS AGO BINDS THEM TO A POSITION OF SUPPORTING INTEGRITY OF ZAIRE, WHICH MEANS SUPPORTING MOBUTU.

7. CONCLUSION

GON VIEWS NIAMEY SUMMIT AS SUCCESS AND IS SATISFIED WITH ITS ROLE AS DEFINED BY THE UNIQUENESS OF ITS GEOPOLITICAL POSITION AND IS NOT AVERSE TO USING IT TO ENHANCE OWN LEADERSHIP POSITION AS WELL AS FACILITATE REGIONAL RESOLUTION OF SOME KNOTTY PROBLEMS. GON, ALTHOUGH ANNOYED, DOES NOT FEEL QADDAFI ABSENCE ITS LOSS TO FACE, BUT QADDAFI LOSS OF CREDIBILITY. JAMES

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